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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/597,976	08/15/2006	Peter-Andre Redert	NLO50010	8767
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EXAMINER				
PERROMAT, CARLOS				
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**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

### Office Action Summary

**Application No.**

10/597,976

**Applicant(s)**

REDERT ET AL.

**Examiner**

Carlos Perromat

**Art Unit**

2628

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 10 August 2009.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-17 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-17 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SF/ICE)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## **DETAILED ACTION**

### ***Response to Arguments***

1. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-17 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claims 1-4 and 6-13 and 15-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wilinski et al. (WIPO Publication No. 02/095680; "Wilinski" hereinafter) in view of Zheng et al. (Q. Zheng, R. Chellappa; Estimation of Illuminant Direction, Albedo, and Shape from Shading; IEEE Transactions of Pattern Analysis and Machine Intelligence, Vol. 13, July 1991; "Zheng" hereinafter) and Wu et al. (Z. Wu, L. Li; A Line-Integration Based Method for Depth Recovery from Surface Normals; IEEE, November 1988; "Wu", hereinafter).

Regarding claims 1, 15, 16 and 17, Wilinski teaches a method for generating from a single view input image, a depth map comprising depth values representing distances to a viewer, for respective pixels of the image (see p. 1, lines 10-18 for generating a depth map, see p. 2, lines 30-32 for a single image; see p. 8 for determining depth of pixels in the image by known methods) and assigning a depth value in a first group of depth values corresponding to the to a pixel so that pixels

belonging to the same image segment are assigned the same group of pixel values (see p. 6, lines 1 and 2 for seed values composing a pixel; see p. 8, lines 31-34 and p. 9, lines 1 and 2 for storing the depth values of the seed pixels; see p. 10, lines 26-28 for assigning to a pixel the depth value of the segment it belongs to). See p. 10, lines 21-30 for a system and units for performing the method, including an input of the digital image, and for preferably using a processor provided with a computer program to execute the method.

Wilinski does not explicitly teach computing cost values that comprise respective measures of a number of and extent of transitions in luminance and/or color components for pixels of the image on a path related to a spatial disposition of objects in the image, wherein said computing includes computing a cost value for a first one of the pixels of the image by determining transitions between image segments based on differences between luminance and/or color values of pairs of neighboring connected pixels at transitions which are disposed on a path from the first one of the pixels to a second one of the pixels wherein the second one of the pixels belongs to a predetermined subset of the pixels of the image. Wilinski does teach detecting transitions between objects in the image by contours (see p. 7, lines 29 and 30 for segmentation based on luminosity; see p. 5, lines 12-18 for using a method for detecting edges by intensity changes); and as mentioned before assigning depth to pixels in those edges, and through them to pixels in their segment. Zheng however teaches a method to obtain shape from shading using contours (see abstract; see p. 684, 1<sup>st</sup> col., 2<sup>nd</sup> par.), where the value of the intensity difference across an edge is

determined and if it is above a threshold, detects a relative depth variation between the segments (see p. 684, 2<sup>nd</sup> col., 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> pars.). Because Wilinski teaches performing segmentation of an image and depth determination of the pixels at the contours generated, and Zheng teaches determining the depth of edges in the image by examining intensity differences across edges, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the image segmentation and depth determination taught in Wilinski with the depth determination across edges taught by Zheng. This combination is implicitly suggested by Wilinski, which discloses segmentation and depth determination of edge pixels by known methods, and expressly by Zheng, which discloses that the method can be improved by performing segmentation first; see the last three lines of page, 684, 2nd col., 3rd par.

Neither Wilinski nor Zheng teach that the measurements for depth are taken along a path which results in a cost function for each pixel which is being examined for depth. The examiner, however, considers obvious that, since the depth determination disclosed in Zheng is a relative depth between the two segments delimited by the contour, the only way to determine the depth for a particular pixel belonging to such a segment is to measure that relative depth with respect to all such segments. In order to do this, the examiner considers that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to examine the different transitions along a path from the pixel to one of the edges of the image and to sum this differences which translate in depth differences as taught by Zheng. Reconstructing shape information from shading through the use of paths is well known in the art, as shown, for example in

Wu (see abstract). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to accumulate the differences measured as taught by Wilinski and Zheng along a path as taught by Wu, in order to obtain a global, rather than relative depth for a pixel.

Regarding claim 2, Wilinski, Zheng and Wu further teach implicitly that the predetermined subset comprises one selected from the group consisting of (i) pixels which are located at a border of the image, (ii) pixels of a part of the border, and (iii) a central pixel of the image". Wu however teaches setting the reference pixel at the center of the image, see p. 593, Implementation subsection, 3<sup>rd</sup> par.; where the reference point is used as the target to create paths and is given and assumed depth, see p. 592, par. below formula 2.6. The examiner considers obvious that when the image is assumed to have the object in the foreground as the central object in the image, which is a reasonable assumption for most images, the pixels at the edges of the image will more likely be the background and the pixel at the center will more likely be the foreground. Under that assumption, creating a path from the pixel being measured to the edge of the image would give a good approximation of height with respect to the background, and creating the path to the center of the image would give a good approximation to the foreground. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to use or combine such paths in order to obtain a global depth value for the pixel, when no previous knowledge of depth is available.

Regarding claim 3, Wilinski, Zheng and Wu also disclose that "a first one of the differences is equal to a difference between respective values of neighboring pixels which are disposed on the path (in Zheng, as explained for claim 1, above).

Regarding claim 4, Wilinski, Zheng and Wu do not explicitly teach that "a second one of the differences is equal to an absolute value of difference between respective values of neighboring pixels which are disposed on the path". Wilinski teaches that the difference is compared to a threshold; see p. 684, 2<sup>nd</sup> col., 3<sup>rd</sup> par., and a depth value is only computed if the difference is above that threshold. Obviously, when applying a threshold to the difference in intensity value, the absolute value would be used, since the difference value could be either negative or positive.

Regarding claim 6, Wilinski, Zheng and Wu do not explicitly teach that "the cost value for the first one of the pixels is computed by accumulating the differences between the values of the pixels which are disposed on the path". The examiner however considers this to be obvious, as discussed for claim 1, above. See in Wu the abstract for integrating the relative depths along a path.

Regarding claim 7, Wilinski, Zheng and Wu do not explicitly teach that "the cost value for the first one of the pixels is computed by accumulating the differences between the values of the pixels which are disposed on the path", although the examiner considers this limitation obvious as discussed. Zheng further teaches that the pixel values are adjusted to meet a predetermined threshold, see discussion for claim 4 above.

Regarding claim 8, Wilinski, Zheng and Wu do not teach that “the cost value for the first one of pixels is computed by accumulating products of differences between the values of the pixels which are disposed on the path and respective weighting factors for the differences”. The examiner however considers that, since Wilinski teaches that the pixels belonging to a segment receive the values for that segment, as discussed above, and the image is segmented in order to distinguish contours delimiting surfaces of the objects, and as taught by Zheng, determining the values of the edge pixels for the edge pixels requires local information, which could diffuse the value of depth for the transition at the edge where the pixel belongs (see p. 684, 2<sup>nd</sup> col., 4<sup>th</sup> par.) one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention would have found it obvious to accentuate the differences between adjoining uniform surfaces by weighting the differences so that the objects silhouettes would have been more clearly defined, for example by weighting more heavily those differences that are closer to the pixel measured, thereby increasing the contrast of the resulting depth image and compensating for the possible sampling error incurred in the sampling of neighboring pixels for edge pixels.

Regarding claim 9, Wilinski, Zheng and Wu would have rendered obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention that a first one of the weighting factors which is related to a difference between a value of a particular pixel and a value of its neighboring pixel, is based on a distance between the particular pixel and the first one of the pixels (see discussion for claim 8, above).

Regarding claim 10, Wilinski, Zheng and Wu would have rendered obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention that a second one of the

weighting factors which is related to a difference between a value of a particular pixel and a value of its neighboring pixel, is based on the location of the neighboring pixel related to the particular pixel (see discussion for claim 8, above).

Regarding claim 11, Wilinski, Zheng and Wu implicitly teach computing a second cost value for the first one of the pixels of the image by combining differences between values of pixels which are disposed on a second path from the first one of the pixels to a third one of the pixels which belongs to the predetermined subset of the pixels of the image (see Wu, p. 592, 1<sup>st</sup> col., par. below formula 2.7 for using multiple paths for reducing errors in measurement).

Although Wu teaches using the average of the relative depths obtained along the path to resolve conflicting cost values for the same pixel, the examiner considers obvious that where two or more conflicting measurements for a unique value are found, there are a limited number of choices on how to solve said conflict. Therefore it would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the method disclosed in Wu, with a choice of the minimum value when two or more conflicting values are found for the same measurement to resolve this conflict by either choosing the larger value, the lower value, the average value or some weighted combination of both as also taught by Wu in the cited section. Arriving at the conclusion that the minimum value is more likely to be correct would have come naturally to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention after normal testing of the method, if, for example, it was found that the most frequent error in measurement is to overestimate the value for a point.

Regarding claim 12, Wilinski, Zheng and Wu also teach "computing a second cost value for a third one of the pixels on basis of the cost value for the first one of the pixels" (in Wilinski, see p. 10, lines 26-28 for assigning each pixel the pixel value of the segment it belongs to and discussion above for calculating the depth of the pixels in the contour in order to get that depth).

Regarding claim 13, Wilinski, Zheng and Wu also teach "computing the second cost value by combining the cost value of the first one of the pixels with a difference between further values of further pixels which are disposed on a second path from the third one of the pixels to the first one of the pixels" (see discussion for claim 11, above for how Wu teaches averaging the results obtained from two paths).

4. Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wilinski et al. (WIPO Publication No. 02/095680; "Wilinski" hereinafter) in view of Zheng et al. (Q. Zheng, R. Chellappa; Estimation of Illuminant Direction, Albedo, and Shape from Shading; IEEE Transactions of Pattern Analysis and Machine Intelligence, Vol. 13, July 1991; "Zheng" hereinafter) and Wu et al. (Z. Wu, L. Li; A Line-Integration Based Method for Depth Recovery from Surface Normals; IEEE, November 1988; "Wu", hereinafter) as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Cahill et al. (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2004/0062439, "Cahill" hereinafter).

Regarding claim 5, Wilinski, Zheng and Wu also teach that "the values of pixels correspond to one of luminance (...)" (see discussion for claim 1, above). Wilinski, Zheng and Wu do not teach that the values of the pixels are measured in terms of color.

Cahill however also teaches a method of generating a depth map where color is used in conjunction with luminance for segmentation (see par. [0002]).

Because Wilinski, Zheng, Wu and Cahill teach methods of creating depth maps from a 2-D image, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the pixel evaluation of luminance in Wilinski, Zheng and Wu with the alternative evaluation of chrominance taught in Cahill because both techniques are interchangeable and combinable to give a more precise result, one applying to grey-level pictures, and the other to color pictures, and both are well-known in the art as taught by Cahill.

5. Claim 14 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wilinski et al. (WIPO Publication No. 02/095680; "Wilinski" hereinafter) in view of Zheng et al. (Q. Zheng, R. Chellappa; Estimation of Illuminant Direction, Albedo, and Shape from Shading; IEEE Transactions of Pattern Analysis and Machine Intelligence, Vol. 13, July 1991; "Zheng" hereinafter) and Wu et al. (Z. Wu, L. Li; A Line-Integration Based Method for Depth Recovery from Surface Normals; IEEE, November 1988; "Wu", hereinafter) as applied to claim 12 above, and further in view of Nakatsuna et al. (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0154116).

Regarding claim 14, Wilinski, Zheng and Wu further teach that "cost values corresponding to respective pixels of the image are successively computed on basis of further cost values being computed for further pixels" (see discussion for claim 1, above). Wilinski, Zheng and Wu do not teach that a first scan direction of successive computations of cost values for a first row of pixels of the image is opposite to a second

scan direction of successive computations of cost values for a second row of pixels of the image, although Wu teaches performing the computations on a row-by-row basis (see p. 593, subsection Implementation, first par.). Nakatsuna, however, teaches a method of interpolating depth values on a pixel-by-pixel basis (see par. [0119] and [0165]), in which the pixels are evaluated in a zigzag path, so that pixels may be positioned in a two-dimensional neighborhood (see par. [0179]).

Because Wilinski, Zheng, Wu and Nakatsuna disclose evaluating depth for pixels on a row-by-row basis, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the depth measurement method as disclosed in Wilinski, Zheng, Wu, with the zigzag inspection path disclosed in Nakatsuna. Such an approach would be representative of the well known principle of locality in program optimization, by which it is advantageous to perform tasks in such an order that the values that have just been calculated and are therefore readily available, are those needed to perform the next calculation.

### ***Conclusion***

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Carlos Perromat whose telephone number is (571) 270-7174. The examiner can normally be reached on M-TH 8:30 am- 5:00 pm EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Kee M. Tung can be reached on (571)272-7794. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Kee M Tung/  
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 2628

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C.P.